

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR ZEV YAROSLAVSKY

April 16, 2013

The Santa Monica Mountains are an important and precious public resource. Topanga Canyon is located in the central part of the mountain range and is traversed by Topanga Canyon Boulevard (SR 27), which runs for twelve miles through the heart of the mountains from Pacific Coast Highway to the San Fernando Valley, in the unincorporated Los Angeles County community of Topanga.

Topanga Canyon Boulevard parallels Topanga Creek, the centerpiece of the Topanga Creek Watershed, which is the 3rd largest coastal watershed draining into Santa Monica Bay. Topanga Creek is unique among these watersheds in that it is the last free running stream from the crest of the mountains to the sea. Over eighty percent of the Topanga Creek Watershed is undeveloped open space. Topanga’s Mediterranean ecosystem supports a large diversity of plant species, among them Coastal Sage Scrub, Oak Woodland, Southern Walnut Woodland, and Riparian Woodland, all of which are identified as “plant communities of special concern” by the State Department of Fish and Wildlife.

MOTION

MOLINA _____

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RIDLEY-THOMAS _____

Traveling north along Topanga Canyon Boulevard from the Pacific Ocean into the Canyon, one sees a wide variety of distinct geologic features, including steep-sided, rugged canyon walls, massive rock formations, and the ancient landslides that have continually modified the canyon relief over the last 75 million years. Traveling from the opposite direction, rising from the Valley foothills and heading south along the Boulevard, one gains an entirely different perspective: the entire canyon is laid out before you, carved over many millennia by Topanga Creek and its many tributaries. Natural ridge lines, mountainous landscapes, small valleys, and broad vistas encompassing Topanga State Park to the southeast, and Summit Valley Edmund D. Edelman Park, Saddle Peak Ridgeline, and UCLA Stunt Ranch Preserve to the west, greet travelers every day.

From this vantage point, the historic "village" of Topanga is barely visible, nestled in small pockets here and there: the highway runs parallel to the creek, with small roads and driveways intersecting and leading off the boulevard to homes, neighborhoods, a theatre, a community house, a public school, and into the woodlands that cover the hillsides to the east and west.

Halfway through the canyon, at the junction of Old Topanga Road and the State Highway, one finds the center of town containing an historic Post Office, Fire Station, small shops and restaurants, and a new public library. These are complemented by a Caltrans-installed signal designed to look like an old-fashioned lamppost, known as the only one of its kind on a State Highway. Plans are underway to underground the utility poles along this section of Topanga Canyon Boulevard beginning in 2014, thus greatly increasing the scenic aesthetic along this route.

Today's Topanga Canyon Boulevard is virtually the same winding, 2-lane "country" road first cut for horses and wagons by pioneers and homesteaders beginning in the late 19th century. Special features, like the bridge over Topanga Creek at Cuesta de Calle which was constructed in 1929, have been called "architectural treasures" because of their arch structure, railing detail, and tile insets. In 1933, this road was turned over to the state and designated Highway 27, Topanga Canyon Boulevard. Thousands and thousands of visitors to Topanga State Park and the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area enjoy access via Topanga Canyon Blvd (SR27) to the wild lands and beaches of this stunningly beautiful corner of our State.

The State Scenic Highway program protects and enhances California's natural scenic beauty. The designation of Topanga Canyon Boulevard along the 12-mile route of the highway, within the unincorporated area of Los Angeles County, will showcase some of the most unique and spectacular landscape in the County. Adoption of the resolution before us today will demonstrate the County's interest in recognizing and promoting its unique scenic value for the public today and the generations to come.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board adopt the attached resolution that supports seeking official scenic designation from Caltrans for the portion of Topanga Canyon Boulevard, State Route 27, in the County unincorporated area known as "Topanga," from the northern slope overlooking the San Fernando Valley to the Pacific Coast Highway;

I, FURTHER MOVE that the Board of Supervisors instruct the Director of Regional Planning to work with Caltrans to prepare the necessary materials to designate this portion of Topanga Canyon Boulevard as a State Scenic Highway.

SN/ABK S:\Topanga Scenic Highway

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
IN SUPORT OF SEEKING OFFICIAL COUNTY SCENIC HIGHWAY STATUS FROM
CALTRANS FOR TOPANGA CANYON BLVD IN DISTRICT 3

WHEREAS, Topanga Canyon Blvd. (State Route 27), in western Los Angeles County is one of the state's most spectacular public mountain highways, stretching from the Santa Monica Mountain foothills of the San Fernando Valley through the mountains to the Pacific Ocean; and

WHEREAS, More than three-quarters of a million people a year enjoy the scenic vistas and woosy terrain as they travel the 12 miles through the Topanga Creek Watershed; and

WHEREAS, Recognizing the economic and aesthetic value of scenic highways, the State Legislature established the California Scenic Highway Program in 1963 to showcase and promote the state's most visually appealing roads; and

WHEREAS, THE Board of Supervisors believes Topanga Canyon Blvd (SR27), as it traverses the Santa Monica Mountains in the area known as Topanga is worthy and deserving of recognition, thereby increasing public awareness of this scenic resource.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles hereby officially requests that Caltrans favorably consider its request to extend formal State Scenic Highway designation to the stretch of Topanga Canyon Blvd extending south from the Los Angeles City/County line south of Mulholland Drive to Pacific Coast Highway (SR1) at Topanga State Beach.

The forgoing resolution was on the 16th day of April, 2013, adopted by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles and ex officio the governing body of all other special assessment and taxing districts, agencies and authorities for which said Board so acts.

SACHI A. HAMAI

Executive Officer-Clerk of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles

By Lachelle Smitherman
Deputy

APPROVED AS TO FORM;

JOHN KRATTLI, County Counsel

By John Krattli
Deputy

